

18.12.2015 | DECLARATION OF AFRIQUE-EUROPE-INTERACT (SECTION MALI)

Commemoration ceremony in Kita in Mali for the malian migrants, who have lost their lives in maritime disasters in the Mediterranean

On 19th december the Malian section of Afrique-Europe-Interact (www.afrique-europe-interact.net) is holding a commemoration ceremony in Kita, in order to remember the maritime disasters in the Mediterranean. Because this region has lost many of their children in the sea on their way to Europe, the same way that many others Malians have died as well. Several dozens of parents and families of the migrants affected from different villages in the region are going to participate in the action, in order to keep up the memory of the dead, to share their suffering and to spread the message of sensibilization.

Against the background of several thousand dead in the Mediterranean since january 2015 and the measures, which the EU-receiving countries have recently enacted, which aim at a stronger involvement of the sub-saharan countries in the defense of potential migrants from the South, we will experience an extension of the human tragedies, which is again and again a violation of universal values and principles.

Based on the disastrous implications of the IWF structural adjustment programs (since the early 1980s), which were forced on the developping countries, together with treaties, which were also tied to hard conditions, the socio-economic and political general conditions have deteriorated in such a manner, that this had led to an extreme weakening of the budgets concerning the basic social services. The equivalent consequences are in addition getting worse because of privatizations and unequal trade relations. Therefore the seasonal and trans-border migration supplies the families in the points of origon of the migrants with those economic and material options which would otherwise lack – as it was expressed not only by the mother, whose son has been living in Libya since 13 years but also by two others persons, who will participate as father respectively brother in the commemoration ceremony on the 19th of december:

- „In the face of our precarious existence our children have the courage to keep up our dignity. And every mother in our village hopes to give birth to a son, who will fill their family in such a way with pride.“
- „Our fathers have gone via St. Louis in order to reach France by boat, and in Marseille they have received their entrance visa; our firstborns have come with the tourist visa and today we are at the stage of pirogues – for the same reasons, though.“
- „How can they be astonished at the tragedies in the sea, when on the other hand their embassies refuse the people in our countries visa and when they at the same time make the countries of the maghreb to pursue us. Therefore the sea is the only thing left, and the human traffickers become our hope, in order to flee somewhere else.“

It is hard for the families of the migrants to understand, that there are more maritime distasters than rescues, while FRONTEX at the same time is raising their means, simply in order to discourage people from the passage.

The spiral of tragedies started in 2005 around the events of Ceuta and Melilla – hand in hand with the first FRONTEX operations against the breakthroughs on the fences, which separate Marocco from the so-called spanish enclaves. Having the fact in mind that the majority of the EU-receiving countries have not signed the UN-convention, which protects all sorts of migrants (including the members of their families and their belongings respective their claims), we do not

stop to criticize this approach aiming at security and instead demand the end of such migration controls.

Because since the formation of FRONTEX the migrants willing for crossing accept more and more risky ways, so that the detours along the possibilities which are developed by human traffickers and other mafia-style gangs are permanently getting longer. The human and financial costs of the maritime disasters disprove the effectiveness of surveillance of the external borders in their current militarized form.

All these are reasons, why the Malian section of the network Afrique-Europe-Interact – prompted by their member group ECK – initiated in the context of the International day of the migrants and their families a ceremony in memory of the dead migrants, of those having drowned and disappeared in the sea; the men, women and children who are walking in the direction of the European wall.

This humanistic action remembers the loss of our strong people on the migration routes; it appeals to the European states to change their view of migrants, to advance the dynamic between migration and development and to take the relationship between the individual and its actual project of migration serious and support it.

As an answer to the repeating tragedies on the sea, the EU continues to tackle the effects but not the causes of this migration, while the African countries do not take the initiative for a real dialogue with the partner receiving countries such as the maghreb states. With development treaties these countries are trained in the surveillance of the borders, in order to prevent potential asylum seekers to even get to the coasts of the mediterranean. But this is a strategy contrary to contract and counterproductive, which does not really take the real reasons for migration into account: The poverty (for example because of the structural adjustment programs), unfair trade, landgrabbing, ethnic wars and civil war, terrorism, corruption in general and in specific, bad governance, a lack of democratic governmental chance, and in addition the consequences of climate change. These are the main reasons why numerous young africans chose the way into exile and hope for a better tomorrow waiting for them on the other side of the mediterranean. „How can you stop someone who has heat under their feet“, says a proverb in Mali.

Beyond the common tackling of questions on migration the African leaders should at last attend to the amelioration of the living conditions of their fellow citizens and provide a better everyday life for them. The migrants are the protagonists of mobility, who want to make a redistribution. „Because we take off for migration by following the routes of our agricultural products and our minerals to Europe; the corruption and the neoliberalism push us to leave our countries“; this is what a young graduate without work told us.

This voice among so many others, who are provided with the pejorative denomination of 'migrants', flees primarily from the bad living conditions, in which it feels forced into in their countries of origin, which – as said before – result from the disastrous action of the governments. In an obvious complicity under the cloak of partnership with egoistic regimes in Africa, the EU continues to collaborate with African countries with the only goal to reduce the flow of migrants. This terrible fact of the loss of our workforce has to come to an end, and the EU has to advocate an equal development of the regions of origin of the migrants of the South.

The African governments have in the first place show that the tragedies, which hit their citizens, touch them. It is for example miserable that hundreds of young Africans squeeze themselves into the ghettos of the human traffickers, who then force them to board old boats in order to

drown. We therefore invite our heads of government to present concrete proposals how they can give the people back hope and how the right to stay can be fostered so that the individuals are motivated to do their thing in their local environment. Because each person has the right to move and settle freely, as article 13 of the general declaration of human rights demands and how it can be found in full in the convention of the United nations from 1992 which we celebrate today.

Europe has its responsibilities, but the countries of origin of the migrants also have their direct responsibilities in the generation of irregular migration. We appeal to the development partners, to precisely examine our governments in order to minimize fraud. In order to avoid permanent negative publicity the African leaders should start an economic policy of good will in order to create prosperity for the population, that is to take concrete measures to release energies on the way to upswing, which especially allow for democratic change, in order to finally end the instability and insecurity. Without these considerations and without the effort to engage in it in favour of the big majority one will always continue to attend the deplorable spectacle of the powerless, which is today called the cemetery of migrants in the mediterranean. We act in the name of the universal values of freedom of movement and the right to stay.

Kita, 17th of december 2015